



Unit 13 — Health and Safety

Reading: Health and Safety

2025 English for Hotels and Tourism. All rights

reserved.

One of the most important aspects of working in a hotel is knowing about correct health and safety procedures to reduce the risk of accidents and if an accident happens how to perform basic first aid.

Most hotels have compulsory basic health and safety training for all employees. During these training sessions, employees learn how to use the items in the first aid kit by practicing treatment of imaginary injuries.

For example, if you are told that a chef in the kitchen has cut his hand on a knife, you could apply a plaster to the cut to stop bleeding. Or, if a guest burns themselves on the hot buffet, you would apply a cream and then a bandage. These training sessions help employees be better prepared for the risks which cannot be avoided.

Perhaps even more important than this is the act of prevention, which can be achieved by training staff on what to do to avoid risks. Imagine the situation of a housekeeper mopping the floor. The floor will be wet for some time so it is important to put up a sign warning against slips. This may seem obvious but often it is not done. Another obvious, but often ignored practice is keeping a list of phone numbers for doctors by reception. This way, no time is wasted when a guest asks for a doctor. This could be very important if the illness is contagious, as other guests could be at risk.

Each area of the hotel can present different risks to the health and safety of guests and staff, and as such it is a good idea for a risk assessment to be carried out at least twice a year. This assessment shows all potential risks and how they can be avoided or at least minimized. These assessments cover all areas from hygiene to fire prevention and are usually done by a designated safety specialist who has had greater training, this person is often a qualified first-aider who can perform more advanced treatment such as CPR if someone is unconscious or not breathing.

Although fire prevention is covered in the risk assessment, it is also checked more frequently as fire can be the biggest risk in a hotel. All smoke detectors need to be tested every 2 weeks to make sure that they are in good working order. Fire extinguishers also need to be checked for signs of damage, and if used must be replaced with new ones. Emergency exits have to be kept clear at all times, which means making sure staff know how important this is. It is also important to carry out a fire drill at regular intervals, this can be difficult to arrange as guests will be forced to leave the building and meet at a designated assembly point which of course can cause inconvenience for them. Despite this difficulty, it must still be done.

The second major safety concern in hotels comes from the kitchen, in particular food poisoning. Of course, no chef would knowingly serve food which could poison a guest, but accidents happen and it is possible that poor storage of fresh food or inadequate hygiene in the kitchen can cause an outbreak of food poisoning. If this happens, the kitchen should be closed immediately until the source of the poisoning can be found.

Of course it is impossible to eliminate all risks, a guest may not be aware that they have an allergy to a certain product. Guests who are sunbathing often suffer from heat stroke even though they know about the risk. Hotel workers must remember that while relaxing on holiday, people often don't think about dangers and as such must think about them for the guest. So if you see an elderly woman sitting on the terrace in bright sun, offer a parasol or a glass of water.

Thank you for your interest!

Please visit the Shop to get the complete PDF.

Discussion Questions

What things can you find in a first aid kit? Can you explain what they are used for?

Have you ever given first aid to anyone? What happened?

Describe what can be done to make sure that no staff or guests are injured in a fire.